MS Delphi Project: Consensus on Optimal Multiple Sclerosis Injectable Treatment Management to Improve Patient Adherence

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Background:
Treatment adherence among Patients with Multiple Sclerosis (PwMS) is poor and treatment discontinuation could be associated with increased healthcare costs and need for high-risk escalation therapies. Such patient behavior may be influenced by differences in how information on interferon β or glatiramer acetate treatments (injectables) is provided. Currently, there is no consensus on guidelines on how information is shared, including guidance how PwMS should act when experiencing disease symptoms or side effects associated with injectable treatments.

Objectives:
To achieve a consensus on how to inform PwMS about adherence, flu-like symptoms (FLS), injection-site reactions (ISRs), fatigue, anxiety, depression and cognitive problems, how to manage these side effects, with the eventual goal of developing and implementing guidelines for MS nurses in the Netherlands.

Methods:
The Delphi methodology was used to reach consensus (>75%). First, total of 25 propositions on adherence and FLS, ISRs, fatigue, anxiety, depression and cognitive problems included in a survey to assess the current opinion of a representative sample of Dutch MS nurses or nurse practitioners (25). The results of the first round were used to determine if there was consensus, and would imply whether a guideline on how to deal with these issues would be valuable. Three more survey rounds with alternative or modified propositions were used to gain more detail on these topics. Comprehensive evidence-based background information was compiled and sent to participants prior to the third and fourth round.

Results:
The responses to the four survey rounds, the background information will be used to determine what could be done to optimize treatment adherence and FLS, ISRs, fatigue, anxiety, depression and cognitive problems, to develop a guideline. An optimal approach to treatment adherence, medical education, clinician support, caregiver and family education and their support will ultimately lead to improved adherence. This information might also be beneficial to MS patients globally.